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BUDS INSTITUTIONS - A KERALA MODEL REHABILITATION OF INTELLECTUALLY DIFFERENTIALLY ABLED

HISTORY

The State Poverty Eradication Mission (SPEM) or popularly known as Kudumbashree, is the women empowerment and poverty eradication program framed and enforced by the Government of Kerala. Kudumbashree, the community organization of women Neighborhood Groups (NHG's) in Kerala, has been recognized as an effective strategy for the empowerment of women in rural as well as urban areas: bringing women together from all spheres of life to fight for their rights or for empowerment. The overall empowerment of women is closely linked to their economic empowerment. Kudumbashree movement was launched by former Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee at a function chaired by the then Local Administration Minister Paloli Mohammed Kutty at Kottakkunnu in Malappuram on May 17, 1998. Once the addressal of poverty was seriously done, it was an eye opener for the institution that, most of the family coming under "ultra poor" status owned a person with mental instability. As a means to address this grave reality, Kudumbashree put forth a model of community based rehabilitation of such individuals with the active participation of Local Self Government that ultimately lead to the formation of BUDS schools in the state.

Looking back to the history of education and rehabilitation of the mentally challenged persons in Kerala, mostly it was taken up by different religious organizations and also it was not extensively present throughout the state. Hence, accessibility to those institutions were limited to very few and so a general majority happened to be detained in their houses without any exposure. It was into this scenario, the BUDS special school for mentally challenged came as a historical initiative to ensure universal education to those belonging to this vulnerable category. The PWD act of 1995 envisages free education to all children between the age of 6 and 18, who are differentially abled. The UN convention on the rights of people with disabilities, to which India is also a signatory, exhorts the member nations to take necessary steps to provide compulsory universal education, employ special teaching-learning methodologies in the process etc along with contemplating vocational education, lifelong learning and protection to make them equipped to lead a life with dignity. During the 9th plan period in 2000, the problems encountered by persons who are physically and mentally challenged, especially the children, was one of the severe problems which came to be noticed during the need assessment study conducted by Kudumbashree as part of its poverty eradication initiatives. Through Kudumbashree various social and financial surveys have been conducted under the supervision of Government of Kerala. Such surveys have come out of shocking information. The study revealed that a sizable number of rural families having members who are physically and mentally challenged, could not deal with issues related to their education, training, health, day care rehabilitation etc owing to a variety of reasons. With the concerted efforts of Kudumbashree mission, the government of Kerala permitted the Grama Panchayats to start CBR centers utilizing plan funds. Most of the differently abled persons were found in the house. The conditions of life, especially those with mental challenges and their families, were very pathetic. In this context, the state government discussed what could be done to face the problems of mentally challenged persons. Those discussions ended up with starting of BUDS Special schools for Mentally Challenged under the supervision of Kudumbashree. The system of education and rehabilitation of the intellectually disabled persons were planned through Local Self Government Institutions (LSGIs). The first BUDS school was established in yVenganoor Panchayat of Thiruvananthapuram District in 2004 with the convergence of LSGD.

BUDS Schools are free and open special schools for mentally challenged children of poor families. The BUDS schools are owned and managed by the local government institutions under the support and guidance of Kudumbashree Mission and the community structure. The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights, and Full Participation) Act 1995 had pronounced the steps to be taken by appropriate governments for the prevention of occurrence of disabilities, to provide education to children with disabilities, to make schemes and norms for non-formal education, and to ensure research and development in assistive devices and teaching aids. The Act also required the governments to set up teacher training institutions for training special teachers for schools of children with disabilities, and to prepare a comprehensive education scheme providing for essential requirements such as transportation, and supply of books.

Parents having a child with special needs experience a variety of stressors and stress reactions related to the child's disability. Parents are known to get impacted in many ways because of having a child with special needs. Their social life is likely to be affected, recreational and leisure activities take a beating, and interpersonal relations with family members may worsen. In most cases, mothers are more affected; poverty adds a new dimension to the stresses faced by such families. BUDS School Project envisages addressing the emotional and economic hardships of poor families with children having special needs.

BUDS SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

- BUDS Schools are registered with the Department of Education of the Government of Kerala and eligible for special grants through the Department of Education. The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) introduced new curriculum for the Special Teachers and Kudumbashree has the convergence with SCERT and thereby all the special teachers working in BUDS Schools are getting proper training under government agencies. Apart from the training received from the government agencies Kudumbashree gives different types of training to teachers for updating their knowledge base.

- Kudumbashree State Mission Team, District Mission Team, Experts and Medical Team regularly visit the BUDS Schools for monitoring of schools. Parents, and members of the LSGIs get training on management of BUDS Schools.

- Most of the Children joined in BUDS Schools were from the families who were economically backward. The transportation was a big challenge to bring the children to BUDS schools and Kudumbashree intervened in this issue and Vehicles for transportation of children are arranged with the support of Kerala Social Security Mission (KSSM) in 2010. Eleven school buses were purchased and handed over to the LSGIs requested for the vehicle. By 2012 again the registered BUDS schools were requested for vehicles and Kudumbashree purchased 13 vehicles for BUDS Schools and in 2015 the requirement of 6 vehicle also met by Kudumbashree from the plan fund.

- The continuous monitoring and evaluation is a key of success and survival of the educational institutions for differently abled. Kudumbashree designed proper policies for this monitoring and evaluation. For this purpose Kudumbashree obtained Government Orders for setting up District Level BUDS Advisory Committee and School level BUDS Vikasana Management Committee.



- As an initiative fulfilling strong societal needs, the BUDS school was able to attract the support from various stakeholders in the society. Strong managerial support, infrastructural development, resource mobilization, a system for integrating the services provided etc were some of the issues to be addressed during the initial years.

STRUCTURE OF DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

For monitoring and evaluating the BUDS institutions Government issued order to constitute the Buds Advisory Committee through GO. (M.S)148/09/LSGD

1. District Panchayat President
: Chairperson
2. Kudumbashree District Mission Coordinator
: Convener
3. Deputy Director-Education
: Member
4. District Medical Officer
: Member
5. District Planning Officer
: Member
6. District Social Welfare Officer (Social Justice Dept.)
: Member
7. Panchayat President (BUDS Institution Located LSGIs)
:Member

8. Block Panchayat President
(If BUDS Institution Located)
:Member
9. Block/Gram Panchayat Welfare standing
committee Chairpersons
:Member

Other than the above mentioned committee members the Advisory Committees The project officer Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA), All Standing Committee Chairman of District Panchayat and Elected representatives of the BUDS Institution Located LSGIs are the special invitees to the District BUDS Advisory Committee. The meeting of District BUDS Advisory Committee held once in every three months.

STRUCTURE OF BUDS VIKASANA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

For monitoring and evaluating the BUDS institutions in the LSGI level Government issued order to constitute the Buds Vikasana Management Committee through GO.(M.S)152/09/LSGD

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. District Panchayat Member of the Concerned Area
2. Block Panchayat President/Member
3. The Three Tier Panchayat Members in the BUDS Institution Located Ward
4. The standing committee chairmen of the LSGI
5. Three nominated ward members from LSGI
(One woman member must)
6. LSGI Secretary
7. CDS Chairperson
8. Two representatives from Parent Teachers Association
9. Principal
10. Staff Member
11. Two NGO Representatives (works for people who are mentally challenged)
12. CDS Charge Officer (Member secretary)
13. ADS Chairperson (the ward where the BUDS situated)

Apart from this the Kudumbashree District Mission Co-ordinator, CHC/PHC Doctor ICDS Supervisor can attend the meetings as ex-officio members.

Day by day the importance of establishing the BUDS school got prominence in the LSGIs. They started to conduct survey to identify the intensity of the differently abled persons in their LSGI. These surveys brought out the importance of rehabilitation of the intellectually disabled persons.

HISTORY OF BUDS REHABILITATION CENTERS (BRC)

Even then the numbers of BUDS Schools were established, the problems and misery of the intellectually disabled above 18 years of the age were not addressed and remained as a question in front of the society. Kudumbashree take it as a challenge in 2013 and tried to establish the rehabilitation centers for the intellectually disabled persons above 18 years. Kudumbashree approached Government to issue the order for establishing BUDS Rehabilitation Centers. The government issued order and guideline on 06/04/2013 with number GO.(MS)144/2013/LSGD. It was a milestone in the history of Kerala as the rehabilitation of the intellectually disabled persons above 18 years became the part of government institutions. These institutions are registered under Social Justice Department by following the Government Order GO.(MS)28/2013/SJD. Hence from 2013 onwards Kudumbashree enhanced the policy of education and rehabilitation of intellectually disabled persons in Kerala. PRESENT STATUS OF BUDS INSTITUTIONS (BUDS & BRCS)

The candle light which was lit in the year of 2004 now gives lights over 6000 families in Kerala. The BUDS institution has grown up with the needs of society and much policy level problems were addressed by Kudumbashree to maintain the quality of BUDS Institutions. In order to enhance the quality of BUDS Institutions and bringing forth a uniform structure, various measures were adopted. A total of 181 BUDS Institutions are currently functioning in the state. In this there are 75 BUDS schools and 106 BRCs.



NUMBER OF BUDS INSTITUTIONS				
Sl.No.	Name of the District	BUDS	BRC	Total
1	Thiruvananthapuram	2	28	30
2	Kollam	2	13	15
3	Pathanamthitta	0	3	3
4	Alappuzha	7	9	16
5	Kottayam	0	1	1
6	Idukki	1	1	2
7	Ernakulam	17	11	28
8	Thrissur	2	6	8
9	Palakkad	2	6	8
10	Malappuram	8	8	16
11	Kozhikode	12	10	22
12	Wayanad	1	2	3
13	Kannur	14	6	20
14	Kasaragod	7	2	9
	Total	75	106	181

NEW POLICIES AND DEVELOPMENTS

IN BUDS

As the years passed, it was necessary for Kudumbashree to address the quantitative and qualitative policies for the development of BUDS Institutions. Some of the most important policies which brought more acceptance and development to the BUDS Institutions can be discussed. In order to enhance the quality of BUDS Institutions and bringing uniformity in the working of them were needed different types of intervention by Kudumbashree.

1. SALARY OF BUDS & BRC TEACHERS

The immediate policy to be met by Kudumbashree as soon as after the establishment of BUDS was the shortage of Special Educators in Kerala. Hence the persons worked with the BUDS Institutions, who haven't had necessary training, were provided with special training. The honorarium paid to the workers and helpers were very meager and it was not sufficient for their hazardous work. Kudumbashree took this issue in front of the government and in 2007 Government decided to pay Rs.3000/-per month to qualified teachers and Rs.1500/- per month to helpers. As the some worker had no special education qualification Kudumbashree gave them chance to acquire the needed qualifications for special educators. After long lasted efforts from the different corners of the society, in 2013 the honorariums of the BUDS special educators were again modified as Rs.7000/- to Rs.10000/-per month. This increase in the honorarium was also no sufficient for them to meet their livelihood and government increased the amount as Rs.12000/- to Rs.20000/-per month in the annual plan guideline.

Even if these all measures taken the honorarium paid to the special educators were not satisfactory and Kudumbashree took upper hand to revise the salary of the

BUDS and BRC Teachers. In 2017 itself Kudumbashree prepared detailed guideline and proposal for the salary augment and submitted it to the Government to consider for making it through the Government Order. Finally after lot of meetings and discussions the government issued the Government Order which was favorable for the salary increase of the BUDS & BRC teachers with the order number GO.(MS)20/2018LSGD in reference to the finance order department 56/2017. As per the new Government Order the salary of the BUDS -BRC Teachers is Rs.30675/- per month for the qualified teachers and if any working without special training may get a salary of Rs.23100/- per month and the Ayahs may get a salary of Rs.17325/-per month .There were more instruction in this order to add with old GOs of BUDS & BRC.

2. PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP)MODEL

In 2017 Kudumbashree looked forward for establishing more institutions throughout the state and this desire brought another golden feather to the account of education and rehabilitation of mentally challenged in Kerala.





Kudumbashree joined hands with Lions Club to establish 13 BUDS Schools in three districts – Alappuzha, Kottayam and Pathanamthitta. Kudumbashree signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Lions Club on 25th November 2017 to start BUDS institutions. The Lions Club provides building and all other infrastructural needs as per the instruction of Kudumbashree. This was major policy change in the history of BUDS Institutions. By bringing the involvement of the private party in the process of establishing the institutions for the intellectually disabled, we believe that the quality of the infrastructure of the institutions also can be improved.

3. VEHICLES FOR BRC AND SECOND VEHICLE FOR BUDS SCHOOLS

If we look at the growth of establishment of BUDS school from 2013 we can see a fast growth in the establishment of the BUDS. The Local Self Government Institutions were started to study the problems of the intellectually disabled in their area and understood that it was very necessary to start BUDS Institutions for the education and the rehabilitation of them. In this juncture the number of BUDS & BRCs increased and the problem of transportation of these children became difficult for the LSGIs as well as the parents. At the same time the number of such persons joining BUDS also increased. This increase in the number of persons joining in institution made trouble to them as they have only single vehicle to carry these all persons. In these circumstances the BRCs requested for the vehicles and the BUDS Schools which had more number of children requested for the second vehicles. These issue also taken up by Kudumbashree and the proposals were send to Government for issuing order for purchasing the vehicles.

4. LIVELIHOOD FOR MOTHERS

OF THE DIFFERENTLY ABLED CHILDREN

The life of the mothers of the intellectually disabled children was very miserable. Added to their acute poverty they remained inside the home looking after their child. But when the BUDS established in the LSGIs they admitted their children in these institutions and some of them found some free time and others were anxious about their ward and followed them to the BUDS or BRCs. As they had not learnt any skilled labour, it was very difficult for them to find any income generating activities. Hence Kudumbashree made tie up with different governmental and non-governmental organizations to meet the problem of non-productivity of these mothers.

SNEHA THANAL –MICRO- ENTERPRISE (ME) AND LIVELIHOOD PROJECT

The Endosulfan is alleged to be responsible for many fatal pesticide poisoning incidents in and around Kasargode district and there were lot of far reaching effect to of polluted land of the district. The toxicity of Endosulfan were the reason for the intellectual disability of many children. The establishment of BUDS institutions in Kasargode districts gave relief to the parents and they found some free time to work. But they were in a dilemma that they cannot adjust their working time according to their children's timings and most of them may not have any productive works. So Kudumbashree with the help of Malayala Manorama started the Micro enterprise for the mothers. This livelihood project is known as "Sneha Thanal". Under this programme Kudumbashree and Malayala Manorama gave skill trainings to the mothers in making cloth bags and umbrellas. These MEs are set

up near to the BUDS Schools in Neeleswaram and Enmakaje which gives them the pleasure of togetherness and work. The mothers working here are happy and forgetting all their miseries inside the walls of their houses. Kudumbashree started the expansion of such MEs to maximum BUDS institutions by including it in the current year programme.

5. 200 NEW BUDS INSTITUTION IN KERALA

The government of Kerala took it as a goal to spread the education and rehabilitation to all the LSGIs and thereby achieve the universalization of BUDS institutions. Hence in the budget government envisaged the establishment of 200 new BUDS institutions in the LSGIs throughout Kerala. The government announced a grant of Rs.25 crore for the establishment of 200 institutions. As soon as the budget declaration the LSGIs came forward for the establishment of the institutions and Kudumbashree collected detailed project reports from all these LSGIs through District Mission. The Kudumbashree mission staff from the districts visited the particular locations, building etc. and approved establishment of the new institutions.



6. “SANJEEVANI” – AGRO THERAPY FOR BUDS&BRC

The physical and mental happiness and exercises needed for the persons with disability to bring out their talents. So Kudumbashree tried different models through



which the children can be active, motivated and productive. Training the BRC beneficiaries in livelihood activities to generate some income was the motive behind the activities of all districts in their initiatives. All the districts practiced different activities to make the children motivated. In such situation Malappuram and Thiruvananthapuram districts introduced agro therapy in the BUDS institutions. As this programme received much acceptance from the children and the society, Kudumbashree state mission planned the extension of agro therapy to all the BUDS institutions in 2018 and named it as “Sanjeevani”. As soon after the introduction of the programme all the institution came forward with

enthusiasm to start Sanjeevani. All the LSGIs provided 2cent land for the children to cultivate vegetables. In this programme Ernakulam District made a step forward by finding one and half acre land for the children to involve in the agro therapy.

CONCLUSION

Once upon a time the differently abled children were remained inside the home in grief and misery. Their parents were unhappy and gloomy. The situation in such houses was beyond our thoughts. Most of the houses were in acute poverty and the child’s intellectual disability added

more sorrow to their life. But the introduction of BUDS by the Government of Kerala under the supervision of Kudumbashree in convergence with LSGIs changed the situations. Now the attitude and approach of the children changed, they learned the life skills and started to

do things their own. The happiness in the faces of the children brought relaxation to the parents and family members. Hence Kudumbashree proved the BUDS Institution as the best model of education and rehabilitation of the intellectually disabled persons.

